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prosperity again irradiate his path. He soon retrieves the errors of indiscretion or confidence, and rises to respectability, perhaps distinction.

But, the advocates of the British system, driven from those strong holds, fly to their fortress. Property, say they, is in England better protected than in any other country on earth. Whatever guards you have formed around it, you have borrowed from us. But in this vivid eulogium we behold the illusion of days that are past! There are two circumstances that most strikingly contrast the situation of the United States and England in this respect. The first relates to the relative expenses of conducting law suits, the second to the relative taxes imposed on property, whose value, it is evident, must materially depend on these circumstances. Now under the boasted common law of England a debt cannot be recovered, without a previous delay of several years, or without the payment of extravagant fees to lawyers; and if the controversy relate to landed property, a life may be spent before the decision of the suit. Can that property be said to be secure, which is exposed to such invasions, whereby its rightful owner may be kept out of its enjoyment for his whole life? Is it not the inevitable tendency of such a system to place the scales of justice exclusively in the hands of the rich, who if they are not invested with the power of turning the beam, are cloathed with the equally dangerous prerogative of keeping it in equilibrio as long as they please; thereby unjustly preserving in their own hands the property of others.

With regard to taxes, it may be safely affirmed, that the assessment in England is ten times as high as in the United States.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ON THE USE OF TRANSLATIONS ;
APPLIED TO PRECEPTORS AND PUPILS.

IF not partial to my religion and country, I would be inclined to think that in the British dominions, the learned languages are taught on plans the most rational, and withal by persons having a greater regard to the cause of christianity and truth, and of instilling into the mind the principles of true philosophy, than in most other places in Europe. But even here the views of the community are not combined, nor are they willing they should be established by the same common laws, as those of individuals. For example, in the case now before us, some are disposed to admit and encourage the constant use of translations as a help for making proficiency in the language to which the attention of their pupils is directed; others, again, wish to discard such a practice, or at the farthest, to use it only on certain occasions. Hence a sort of extravagance clearly prevails on both sides, which it is my intention to exhibit. But the only satisfactory method I can have recourse to in performing this is, by examining the sentiments of a translator, and endeavouring to point out their conformity or non-conformity to the promotion of classical learning. The individual, then, whom I chose for this purpose is Mr. John Clarke,* (once master of the public grammar school at Hull) who has been of infinite service in

* The reason which induced me to select Mr. Clarke is, that he has written a professed treatise on the advantages of translations. Wherefore, the observations made on their use in the Latin tongue, may also apply to those in the Greek, &c.

rendering the meaning of several Roman authors clear and intelligible.

When boys set forward in the reading of authors, says he, there are but three several methods for them to proceed in: ‘First, by the help of a master to construe their lessons to them. Secondly, by the help of a dictionary; or, Thirdly, by that of literal translations.’

In considering the first of these forms, he asserts, that very few of our schools are provided with any more than two masters; “and therefore, in that case it is impossible for a man that has three or four classes to take care of, to give that attendance to them all, as to keep them employed a third part of the time they have to spend in the school.” This he admits as plain and undeniable. But perhaps it may be suggested, that in the time in which he lived, (though not remote) schools for the instruction of youth were not so numerous as they are at present; and, therefore, it is founded on some degree of probability, that the teachers appointed for their respective offices were quite inconsiderable in comparison of the number of pupils in each class.

But passing over this consideration, he proceeds to the second method, by which a scholar may learn the language, that is, by “the help of a dictionary.” Now he says, “as to the use of a dictionary to understand the authors they read, that way of proceeding is still more improper than the former. You may as reasonably set boys of eleven or twelve years of age to build a church, as to get their lessons by a dictionary. For in the first place, the looking for their words will make a miserable waste of their time; and, in the next place, considering which of the various significations most words have, may be

for their purpose, will occasion the consumption of as much more; and what is still worse, the time spent in both, will be all lost to them, for want of sense to distinguish betwixt what is proper for their purpose, and what is otherwise.”

It may be laid down as an universal axiom, that there are difficulties both real and supposed, attending every occupation and pursuit in life, whether it be literary or mechanical. Even those things which at first sight seem obvious, or at least requiring but little assiduity appear after some examination troublesome and abstract.

Most young persons are found to judge of matters relating to classical improvement, as completely above their most diligent researches.—For example, in learning the rudiments of Latin grammar, when interpreted in their mother-tongue, sometimes from want of industry and perseverance, the neglect of masters, or their own stupidity, they are frequently compelled to relinquish their plan, thinking that they might as well attempt to form a straight and regular path through an extensive desert, as to prosecute their study with any advantage. The same obstacles frequently present themselves in the way of painting, architecture, navigation, and various other employments, most of which require great pains, and perseverance before the individuals who would study them can ever become adepts.

But while, from such postulata, Mr. Clarke says that it is as practicable for boys of eleven or twelve years of age to construct an edifice as to prepare their lessons by a dictionary, a question naturally arises, (and is assuredly one which he had not in contemplation) namely, What is the general use or design of a dictionary? Now if by a dictio-

If we are to understand a nomenclature, or form of words arranged in alphabetical order, with the signification of each term or phrase, and to which recourse is to be made for understanding the language, we are led to infer that such a definition is quite inconsistent with our author's sentiments; for by him it would appear that a dictionary is of no other utility but to keep it dormant, even when boys are entering upon their studies, or when they are pretty far advanced in them.

With all due deference to our author's known abilities and good sense, it might be a sort of crime to advance that he prohibited the use of dictionaries; but what appears highly objectionable on his part, and which I think, is directly opposite to the improvement of youth in this department, is that he is too much disposed to recommend the study and perusal of literal translations in preference to that of a dictionary. But it can never be disputed by any proficient in the Latin language that a dictionary is of the greatest importance; for without constant application be made to it, all rule and instruction will be of little avail; besides, an idea naturally strikes the mind, that if, in order to prepare their lessons, boys were not allowed the use of dictionaries, how comes it to pass that translators could convey to the mind of the readers in a just, clear, and elegant manner, the true sense or thoughts of those *authors* which were never translated before? When an Englishman for instance, translates a book from the Latin into his own tongue, can it ever be supposed that he acquired that general stock of knowledge from the English version of other books, which could direct him in his attempt, without being forced to refer to the dictionary of the original language? Or,

are we to entertain the opinion that the grammar, which is unquestionably the basis of the language, can ever furnish a pupil beginning to construe an author (as *Cordery's Colloquia Selectæ Sententiaz, Aesop's Fables*) with the explanation of each word or phrase; but it is plain, that this is not the design of grammar: this alone then is the office of a dictionary. Such an insinuation of Mr. Clarke is so selfish and futile, that it scarcely requires any attention to confute it.

But even here our author does not seem satisfied to confine his extravagance in recommending translations: he thinks the looking for words in a dictionary, the difficulties attending a proper selection of those that will best suit the passage, and there being a deficiency of sense in juvenile minds to discriminate what is right from what is wrong, renders it indispensably necessary to fly to those means, which will "save such a miserable waste of their time." Not to delay on these points, it must be confessed (and is a truth I believe, experienced by all mankind, even by the most brilliant geniuses) that boys not above 13 or 14 years of age, are hardly endowed with that strength and penetration of intellect as to enable them to understand clearly the books they are reading. Many passages indeed, of the classical writers are obscure and difficult of interpretation, which arises either from erroneous editions, inaccurate annotations, or the ill advised practice of masters and guardians of hurrying on too rapidly those intrusted to their care, before they attain to a competent knowledge of the elementary parts of the language. This last is, indeed, an error but little regarded at the present day. I have strong reason to believe, that a variety of school-masters, (principally by the insti-

gations and discontent of parents who have their children with them,) being led to imagine that they cannot finish their course too soon, hasten their pupils from one book to another, in such a manner, that, in fact, they commence Virgil and Horace without even superficially understanding the construction or arrangement of sentences, the rules of prosody, the geographical situations of the places of which they are reading, or the history and mythology of the individuals recorded, much less, being grounded in them. Wonderful! They never reflect, that if their children, in the first place, were properly versed in the grammar, (which is of all considerations the most essential for this study), and afterwards made to understand well one or two of the subsequent books, their transition through the language will become more easy and inviting; and what is still more, they will soon gain an ascendancy over those numerous and perplexed occurrences, which justly strike terror into such unreflecting minds. This is solely attained by the help of a dictionary, and the attention of a preceptor in pointing out the words, and representing in their proper colours the several passages, which to them appear dark and inexplicable.—To assert then that the looking for words in a dictionary creates a superfluous waste of time, is as ridiculous as it would be for an accomptant to transcribe his questions and answer out of a key of Arithmetic, without endeavouring to perform the operations, or even giving himself the trouble of examining their import for such a procedure.

But, in order to stamp a value upon the use of translations, and deprecate that of dictionaries, our author says again, that “the best dictionaries will frequently fail them, that is, they will not furnish them

with such words as will serve their turn, and with which they ought to be served. Besides, supposing our dictionaries were no ways deficient, and young lads between the age of ten and fourteen had all understanding enough to make a proper use of them; yet by what methods can they unravel the unnatural, awkward, perplexed order of words in the Latin tongue?”

Now by far the greater, if not the whole amount of these assertions is altogether founded on sinister and self-interested motives, and consequently in no degree, tend to the extension or encouragement of this justly celebrated language.—Is our author about to innovate in that track which never was beaten before? Does he really wish to perform things which are utterly impossible? Are our dictionaries then to be entirely extirpated, never more to be used? Or, can translations, however correct they may be, now be substituted in the place of dictionaries? As well might we attempt to inclose an ocean within certain limits, or erect a tower, “whose top might reach unto heaven,” as to suppose that translations, if once adopted, could ever faithfully answer the design of dictionaries. It would be no less marvellous.—But to confute this idea of Mr. Clarke’s, concerning the imperfection of dictionaries, I observe they are, since his time, in general much improved; and that probably the number of words in the Latin language, which are not to be found in them at present, are very inconsiderable in impeding a beginners progress. For instance, compounded words, as *Adstipidor*, *advolo*, *subresco*, with a multiplicity of others, are not inserted*; but in order to com-

* Besides some verbs, and names of places, there are appellations of men as

pete for this defect, if any it is, we are to throw away the prepositions, and look for the principal verbs, which ultimately answers the purpose required. In Cæsar's Commentaries there are some words of Gallic origin, which though in Latin, no English signification can be found for them: such as *Bavaria*, with which the French *Bavier* corresponds. Also, in Erasmus's Colloquies, of *Walsinghamica*, Walsingham, and several shires in England, which are not Latin, but English terms.

But he proceeds farther, and asks, by what means must boys "unravel that unnatural, awkward, perplexed order of words in the Latin tongue?"—I may reasonably ask the followers of Mr. Clarke, that if the ordering of words in speech be attended with such insuperable difficulty, what is the use of Syntax or construction? Here we are taught the coincidence or right dispositions of words in a sentence;—how to convey our thoughts unto others;—to know what changes can be made upon them when cloathed in language; to reduce the rules to practice, and make them answer the purposes for which they are intended. Wherefore, Mr. Ruddiman justly observes, that to the attainment of this end there are two things absolutely necessary, viz.—"1. That in speech we dispose and frame our words according to the laws and rules established among those whose language we speak. 2. That in like manner we know what is spoken and written, and be able to explain it in due order, and resolve it into the several parts of which it is made up."

Eutrapelus, Orgetorix, Dumnorix, and others too tedious to be mentioned; but upon examination most of them will be found in doctor Lemprière's Classical Dictionary.

But, without either learning to speak the language, or to understand it when spoken by others, it may be perhaps deemed sufficient for them (first of all) to know in authors the manner in which the words are placed, and the rules requisite for such a plan. Now can this be ever attained without being perfectly grounded in Syntax?—Are we to suppose that such knowledge will come of its own accord, without making application for it? As well might a wounded soldier expect a leg or an arm to be cut off, without enduring the pain of the surgical operation.

Having thus attempted to answer some of the objections advanced by Mr. Clarke, against the use of dictionaries, I shall just take notice of another objection, which, if properly solved, may serve to remove some considerable difficulties attending the proper application of them. He says it is "sometimes alleged, that the getting their lessons by a dictionary fixes the meaning of words better in the memory of boys, than the use of translations." To this he answers, "that what is alleged, supposes it possible for young boys to get their lessons by the help of a dictionary;" which he thinks, he has shown is not the case. "But let us suppose it practicable," adds he, "and upon the supposition examine the allegation brought to show the way of doing the business by dictionary, preferable to the use of literal translations. Does the tossing over the leaves of a dictionary, in order to find a word, contribute to fix the meaning of it, when found, in the memory? If so, the longer boys are in finding a word, that is, the longer they are e'er they come at the sense of the word, the better they will remember it; which is as much as to say, that the less business they do,

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the greater progress they will make, and the faster they will proceed.

But in whatever degree these observations may at first sight wear a garb of plausibility; I look upon it as a truth as self-evident as any demonstration in mathematics, that translations how literal soever they may be, never tend to impress the mind with a permanent conviction. The impression they make is like that made by a seal upon wax, or the print of a human foot upon sand, which is easily effaced by the first approaching object, or by the corroding hand of time, after which not even the slightest vestige presents itself to the view. This is indeed, no hypothesis nor ideal picture; for I know from actual experience that when translations are first put into the hands of pupils, it comes to pass by a too strict attention to them, and consequently their neglecting the other significations which words may have in the dictionary, that what knowledge they have acquired in that particular study is almost totally lost, not only in the space of two or three years, but in the trifling interval of a few succeeding months. But as nothing is more real and obvious than experiment, let an instructor teach his pupils several Latin books, by permitting him to refer to literal translations, is it not ten to one that, though he may construe his lesson in an easy and fluent manner (which would be monstrous for him not to do) the most of this is obliterated from his mind before the ensuing repetition, unless he has recourse to the same hurtful means? Wherefore, when a boy begins to prepare his task by the help of a dictionary and master, were he to understand only a few lines, I can assure him that such a process is of more advantage that if he were to read over two or three hundred lines by that of trans-

lations; whilst, at same time, were he to abide by the precepts of Mr. Clarke, his time is converted to the worst of purposes, and his mind is not impressed with what may be styled a lasting and radical knowledge of the language.

Methinks here an objector says, that it is my intention to annihilate translations. This, I candidly acknowledge, is not my aim. But if there be a baneful extreme on any side, it must certainly be that of attending to them in lieu of dictionaries. The former may, indeed, be justly likened to a man of disordered constitution, moderately applying medicine, which serves to remedy his disease; and the latter, on the other hand, to medicine immoderately applied, which may for ever ruin his health, if not bring him to an untimely end.

Nobody of common sense, I presume, will be disposed to deny the use of translations for the convenience of masters, seeing the business is performed with more ease and dispatch, and as few enter into such a capacity without having previously acquired a pretty general knowledge of the mode of construction and parsing. Even boys who have advanced to Sallust and Ovid might with propriety consult translations, but on no other condition, than that of their having ascertained the sense of their authours by the assistance of a dictionary, and their tutor for the time preceding. By so doing, their task instead of a burden will become a pleasure to them; by being thus gratified, they will consider the weight of the obligation conferred upon them, and will not forsake the one, by paying a too strict attention to the other. Let me then offer this grateful admonition to those concerned in the acquisition of the languages, that the longer they keep from the use of

translations, the sooner will they become conversant with the grand object of their studies.

Belfast.

S. S.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

TENTH REPORT FROM THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, IN IRELAND.

To his Grace Charles Duke of Richmond and Lenox, &c. Lord Lieutenant general, and general governor of Ireland.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

WE the undersigned Commissioners, appointed for enquiring into the several funds and revenues granted for the purposes of Education, and into the state and condition of all schools upon public or charitable foundations, in Ireland, in pursuance of the powers vested in us, beg leave to lay before your Grace, our report upon the HIBERNIAN MARINE School in Dublin, for maintaining, educating, and apprenticing the orphans and children of decayed seamen in the royal navy and merchants' service.

The Hibernian Marine Society was incorporated by a charter of his present Majesty, in the year 1775, on the petition of the lord mayor, archbishop of Dublin, and other noblemen and gentlemen of the city of Dublin, members of a marine society associated for the support, education, and fitting for sea the orphans and children of seafaring men only—setting forth, that the said society had, by voluntary subscriptions and benefactions, been enabled to establish a nursery and school for the maintenance and instruction of the children of seamen, who had perished or been disabled in his Majesty's or the merchants' service; and that they had been further enabled by the bounty of parliament

to build a house in the city of Dublin, near the sea, capable of receiving two hundred children and upwards, when their funds should admit of it.

The charter of the society (a copy of which, with the bye-laws, is here-with submitted to your grace) directs that the corporation shall be intituled, “The Hibernian Marine Society in Dublin, for maintaining, educating, and apprenticeing the orphans and children of decayed seamen in the royal navy and merchants' service,” and that the lord lieutenant, the lord-primate, the lord-chancellor, the archbishop of Dublin, and other officers of church and state for the time being, and certain noblemen and gentlemen by name, with others to be elected from time to time, shall be members of the said society, which it empowers to purchase and hold lands to the value of two thousand pounds per annum, and to erect nurseries and schools in other parts of Ireland.—It directs four general quarterly meetings to be held yearly, at one of which a president, seven vice-presidents, two secretaries, a treasurer, register, and other necessary officers, shall be annually elected from the members of the society, and sworn into office by the president, one of the vice-presidents, or two other members; and also a committee of fifteen for carrying into execution the rules and orders of the corporation, who shall meet on the first monday in every month, or oftener if necessary. It further directs, that none but children of deceased, reduced, or decayed seamen in the royal or merchants' service, or that had been so, shall be received into any nursery or school of the corporation. By the bye-laws of the society (which they are empowered to make by the charter) none of the members of the corporation